

Essays and Contributions.

THE PRECIOUS THINGS OF HEAVEN.

JOHN DUKE MCFADEN.

Moses in blessing Joseph, called upon him "the precious things of heaven" while he referred to the sun and moon and stars and dew, I think these include some other things which are also "the precious things of heaven," I will name only a few.

The precious foundations of heaven. Good old Abraham looked for a city that had foundations, he found it in that great city, the Holy Jerusalem. It had twelve foundations, precious foundations, precious from a commercial view; all manner of precious stones, jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, amethyst, these are precious from the view of ideality, beautiful foundations, garnished with all these precious stones, the brightest colors meeting and blending and reflecting the atmosphere of a pure world, precious because of the idea of a stability, earthly foundations are not stable, these cannot be overthrown, the cyclone may whirl, the hurricane may roar, the typhoon may sweep, but above the whirling cloud and roaring wind and sweeping power may be heard the voice of the Psalmist, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved."

The precious wall of heaven. The city of Jerusalem is surrounded by a wall of jasper, think of six thousand miles of jasper, over two thousand feet high, what a precious wall not only because beautiful and valuable, but because the idea of safety it implies. Walls were built around the cities in olden times to keep out the enemy; when night came the gates were shut, and the people were at ease because they felt safe. We build walls around our business, our homes, and our churches, but through some crevice, disease, or disaster, or death comes, but behind this jasper wall we are safe. We journey through earth, but there is danger in the turn of every car wheel, and when the engineer with hand on the throttle permits us to step out in our own town, we congratulate ourselves on being safe at home, only to meet danger in in some new form. We are travelers to

a brighter clime, and after we have won the last part of the journey and stand behind the jasper wall, we will be forever safe; "Neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat."

The precious gates of heaven. Twelve gates pierce this wall, each gate a pearl, a pearl the size of your thumb would be a king's ransom, but here each gate is a single pearl, swinging in a wall of beauty, over twelve foundations garnished with precious stones: these gates are precious to us because of the truth they present, freedom of access, they swing wide open, and are not shut, "for there shall be no night there." Leaving St. Joe for Chicago, our friend, a railroad man led us through the crowd and up the steps of the coach but the south door was locked, we could see the seats filling but the door was shut and we had to enter another car. With grace in our hearts, there will be no trouble in getting a seat in glory, heaven's gates are open wide, for all who come from the four points of the compass, and as we reach the threshold of that blissful abode we can say with consecrated Corkmen "I am sweeping through the gates washed in the blood of the lamb."

The precious scenery of heaven. This bright place is rich in scenery. If the outside is so beautiful the inside must be beyond the power of pen to describe. There is no scenery like the scenery of heaven. The most conspicuous object must be the throne of God surrounded by twenty-four elders robed in white with crowns of gold on their heads. Over the throne is a perfect rainbow like unto an emerald, before the throne is a sea like unto glass mingled with fire, from the throne flows a pure river of water, on either side of it is the tree of life. Here the angels have their homes, and the spirit of just men made perfect have their palaces, and all the redeemed their mansions. What a place. No throne of czar or queen ever equaled the throne of God. No rainbow reflecting the beauty of its seven colors ever equaled that rainbow that girds the throne. You may have visited the Atlantic or Pacific or Indian ocean, but no ocean view ever equaled that view of the sea of glass mingled with fire containing the saved worshippers of the living God. You may

have visited the Hudson, or Rhine but no river view ever equaled the view of the river of life. You may have visited the trees of the east and of the west, but no tree equals the tree of life which has twelve manner of fruit and yields its fruit fresh every month and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Eye cannot see, heart cannot understand, imagination cannot picture the beautiful scenery of heaven, there it will never fade, no mildew will blast, nor frost wither; it stands forever. The earth may meet with fervent heat and the heaven roll together as a scroll, but the precious scenery of heaven is "pure and undefiled and fadeth not away."

The precious songs of heaven. God has planted the faculty of music in the human mind, and its development adds to his joy and spirituality. God's people are a singing people, and death cannot destroy their music loving principle. The preacher said, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. God's children sing as they travel, and do not cease when they stand without fault before the throne. He who giveth his beloved songs in the night will thrill their heart when they reach eternal day. That was a great song the children of Israel sang, when Moses led them to the salvation side of the Red Sea, that was a great song the freed slaves sang when they gathered in their churches and homes at midnight and sent from their hearts "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," but no earth bound song can touch the precious song of heaven; they are not sin stained. Think of the song the hundred and forty-four thousand sing. "And they sing as it were a new song before the throne." Music there, think of the song of those who having obtained the victory, sing on the sea of glass; "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." The songs of earth are precious and helpful, the memory of some linger like the perfume of roses in the vase, but oh, those precious songs of heaven how they will thrill us, and link us to the throne.

The precious reunion of heaven.